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Second extension of the first regional cooperation framework for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

Note by the Administrator

Period of extension:
1 January 2001 to 31 December 2001

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I. Background and justification

1. The first regional cooperation framework (RCF) for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was approved at the second regular session of the Executive Board in March 1997 for the period 1997 to 1999 and was subsequently extended for one year to 2000 by the Executive Board at its first regular session 2000. A mid-term review was carried out in accordance with Executive Board decision 97/9 by an independent team of consultants in January 2000. Its purpose is to assess how the regional programme has helped to achieve RCF objectives and to draw lessons and recommendations for the formulation of the second RCF.

2. The review noted the considerable achievements and impact of activities undertaken within the RCF, especially the promotion of human development through the publication of national human development reports (NHDRs), the establishment and strengthening of human rights institutions and the fostering of gender equality. The review, however, also noted aspects of the regional programme which, in terms of performance, were less than optimal and highlighted several areas for special consideration when designing the second RCF and regional programme. Most of the recommendations for improvement referred to measures that could be taken to maximize the participation of all stakeholders in the design, management and monitoring of RCF implementation. Among the key preliminary lessons derived from the implementation of the RCF thus far are the need to ensure: (a) clearer division of responsibilities between the Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS (RBEC) headquarters and the Bratislava Regional Support Centre (RSC), which managed the day-to-day operations of the regional programme; (b) the systematic involvement of country office colleagues and key stakeholders in semi-annual and annual regional programme review meetings; (c) better coordination of resource-mobilization efforts accompanied by clearer and more consistent messages on the objectives of the regional programme and of its achievements; (d) greater attention to cost-efficiency and effectiveness in the use of limited regional programme resources; (e) better integration of databases and web pages produced by the individual projects; and (f) greater use of information technology.

3. For the next RCF, the challenge is to translate the selected theme areas into objectives and sub-objectives that can be acted on through a coherent programme approach. This approach will further the region's ability to reap the benefits of management, finance and programming efficiencies. At the same time, it is necessary to focus regional efforts on specific objectives and sub-objectives that affect the region as a whole or affect several countries in a subregion. These objectives should be limited, in accordance with resources available, and be in areas where UNDP has a niche and where substantive collaborative efforts can be established with other external assistance providers, governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders. Recent developments in south-east Europe (SEE) represent a significant move towards stability in the subregion and increase considerably the prospects for development in the immediate future. In recent years, UNDP has been able to establish a significant presence in the subregion to provide post-conflict assistance to countries emerging from several years of violence and political instability. It will be essential to assess how these recent changes will impact on the types of regional programming UNDP may implement during the second RCF period.

4. An extension of the current RCF is justified because it will allow time to assess the recent changes in the development situation of different parts of the region. It will also allow time to prepare a concept paper and the content (including the design of management/monitoring mechanisms) of the next RCF on the basis of a well thought out process of consultations with programme country counterparts under the leadership of the newly appointed senior management of the regional bureau and the RSC in Bratislava. A second extension would also bring the RCF for Europe and the CIS in line with the duration and timing of the RCFs for other bureaux.

II. Objectives

5. The extension of the RCF for a second year will bring the total RCF period to a total of five years. During the extension period, two primary objectives will be pursued: (a) the continuation of ongoing regional programme activities on the basis of a results-oriented work plan for the extension period; and (b) the implementation of a participatory process of consultations with recipient governments, country

offices, RBEC and RSC staff and other international partners in the preparation of the second RCF for Europe and the CIS.

6. In line with the objectives of the first RCF and the expected results outlined in the regional implementation strategy and the regional strategic results framework, RBEC will implement a one-year programme of regional activities during the extension period. The activities to be undertaken have been identified as the most strategic, with the greatest potential for impact, based on the progress of the regional programme to date and the time and resources available under the extension period.

A. Governance

7. Activities supporting the improvement of governance constitute the largest focus area for the regional programme during the extension period. This reflects the strong demand for such support from programme countries. At the subregional level, the regional programme during the extension period will support the institutionalization of consultative policy-making processes in central Asia and south-east Europe by developing mechanisms for government/civil-society dialogue, providing capacity-building training to NGOs and implementing pilot projects in four countries. The regional programme will also strengthen the capacity of central Asian parliaments by supporting the development of regional strategy and action plans that will be complemented by specific training for audit and ombudsman institutions. Staff of ombudsman and human rights institutions in central Asia will receive training and benefits from institutional-development strategies supported by the regional programme.

8. Building on the success of prior initiatives to develop national early warning systems (EWS) in south-east Europe, the regional programme during the extension period will develop the concept and structure for a regional EWS, support the preparation of three regional EWS reports, and develop web-based information and knowledge-sharing services. At the regional level, the regional programme will provide policy support to improve decentralization policies by implementing the fiscal decentralization initiative (in partnership with the World Bank, the Open Society Institute, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Council of Europe) and by integrating three institutional platforms (Lithuania, Macedonia, Czech Republic) into the Local Government Information Network (LOGIN). Several countries in the Europe/CIS region have begun to provide modest resources for development assistance as emerging donor States. The regional programme will support the development of national development assistance strategies and establish an emerging donor network to provide mechanisms for knowledge-sharing.

B. Poverty eradication

9. The RBEC regional programme will continue to support the development of poverty eradication strategies and pro-poor policies and will focus on providing policy support to programme countries that have not yet developed such broad strategies (Ukraine and Russia). It will, at the same time, facilitate the exchange of information and experience among those countries that have already begun implementing such strategies (in central Asia and Caucasus subregions). During the extension period, European Union candidate countries will receive special policy support to develop policies and institutional frameworks that will aid the vulnerable segments of society during the European Union accession process. The exchange of information among the region's policy experts and academic researchers will be facilitated through the establishment of a web-based knowledge network in partnership with a regional think tank. As part of efforts to promote sustainable livelihoods through job creation strategies, the regional programme will prepare strategy papers and training programmes for enterprise development in each RBEC subregion.

10. To build on the NHDR influence on policy-making in the region, the regional programme will extend university courses on human development to at least one university in each subregion. Workshops and training will also be provided to develop frameworks to analyse human-security concerns, which will lead to the publication of human security reports for two subregions during the extension period.

C. Gender in development

11. Building on the regional programme's promotional work in gender in development, which has until now concentrated on the capacity-building of gender-in-development units in programme countries,

regional programme assistance during the extension period will focus on integrating gender into national, subregional and regional development programmes and policies. The regional programme will develop and test a gender-mainstreaming methodology and train country office staff on how to use it to develop UNDP programming and to provide advice to government and NGO counterparts on mainstreaming gender in national policies. Three subregional workshops covering all countries in the region will provide training. A web-based knowledge-management mechanism will be established to facilitate the sharing of best practices, which will be accessible to programme country counterparts and country office staff. The regional programme will share the gender-mainstreaming methodology with other United Nations agencies to ensure a coordinated United Nations approach to gender in development.

D. Environment

12. In the area of environment, the regional programme will emphasize policy advisory support to programme countries. The environmental themes that will be emphasized include biodiversity, climate change, international waters and ozone depletion. At least five national and subregional projects will be developed for Global Environment Facility (GEF) funding. A web-based regional knowledge-sharing network will be established in all subregions.

E. Preparation of the second regional cooperation framework

13. The procedures outlined in the UNDP Programming Manual will guide the preparations of the second RCF for Europe and the CIS. The process will involve extensive consultations with UNDP country offices and recipient governments in the region to identify the development challenges to be addressed and the priority actions to be supported by the regional programme. As a first step, a concept paper will be prepared by the end of the first quarter 2001 and circulated to all stakeholders for review and comment. In April 2001, a meeting of the Resident Representatives of the region will be convened with the participation of senior government representatives to formally endorse the vision and direction of the RCF based on the concept paper.

14. Upon finalization and endorsement of the concept paper, the preparation of the new RCF will be completed between May and August 2001. Resident Representatives and government counterparts will review and endorse the new RCF. The internal appraisal of the new RCF document, which will include reviews by the bureau of the Programme Advisory Committee and the Population Working Group, will be completed by October 2001. The RCF will be submitted to the Executive Board secretariat by October 2001 for consideration at its first regular session in January 2002.

III. Recommendation

15. The Administrator recommends that the Executive Board approve the second one-year extension of the first regional cooperation framework for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States for a period of one year, from 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2001.

Annex

Resource mobilization target table for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (1997-2001)

(In thousands of United States dollars)

Source	Amount	Comments
UNDP core funds		
IPF carry-over	(795)	
Line 1.2	22 931	
SPPD/STS	757	
Subtotal	**22 893**	
UNDP other resources		
Government cost-sharing	-	
Third-party cost-sharing	3 640	Of which US$ 318 thousand is anticipated in 2001 for governance activities.
Funds, trust funds and other	11 500	
of which		
UNIFEM	3 973	
GEF	7 000	
Capacity 21	13	
Other Trust Fund	514	
Subtotal	**15 140**	
Grand total	**38 033**	

Abbreviations: GEF = Global Environment Facility; IPF = indicative planning figure; SPPD = support for policy and programme development; STS = support for technical services; TRAC = target for resource assignment from the core; and UNIFEM = United Nations Development Fund for Women.